



Supporting Isolated, Emerging, and Returning Jewish Communities around the Globe

KULANU

"All of Us"



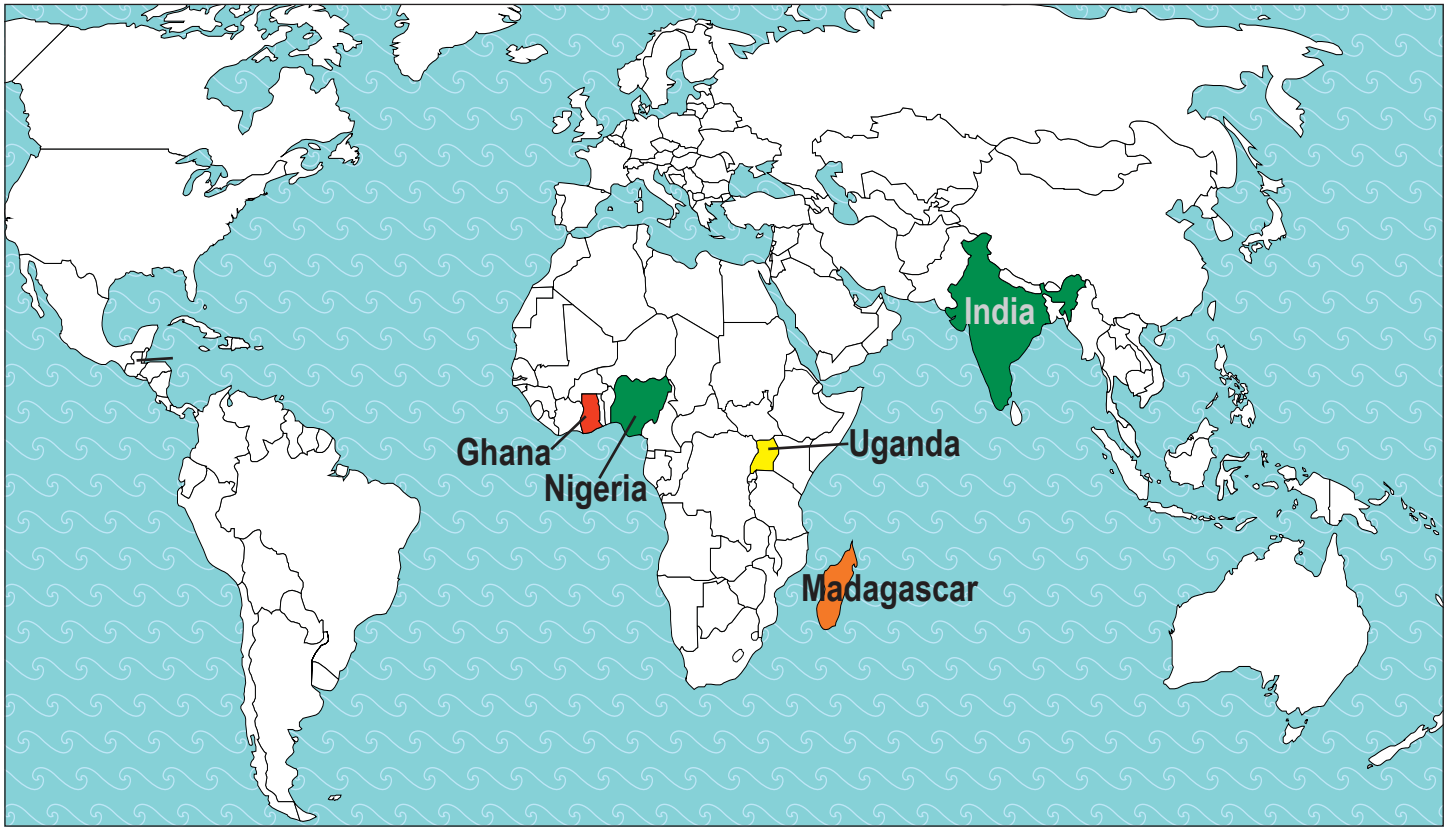
Hope Troupe Uganda dancing and playing music at the Kulanu-Abayudaya Music and Dance Festival, part of the joint 25th/100th anniversary celebration. Photo by Mike Tucker. See story on page 12.

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Where in the World is Kulanu in this Issue?

Kulanu is in touch with dozens of communities around the world. When we are contacted, we learn what their needs are and do our best to find ways in which to help them further their study and practice of Judaism and build their communities. You can see on this map where the communities featured in this issue of Kulanu are located.

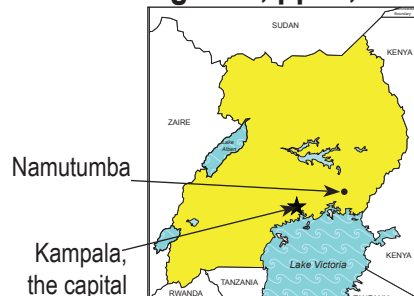


Nigeria, pp4, 15



Abuja, the capital

Uganda, pp12, 14



Namutumba

Kampala,
the capital

Madagascar, p14

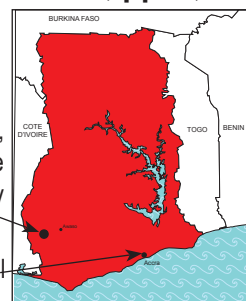


Antananarivo,
the capital

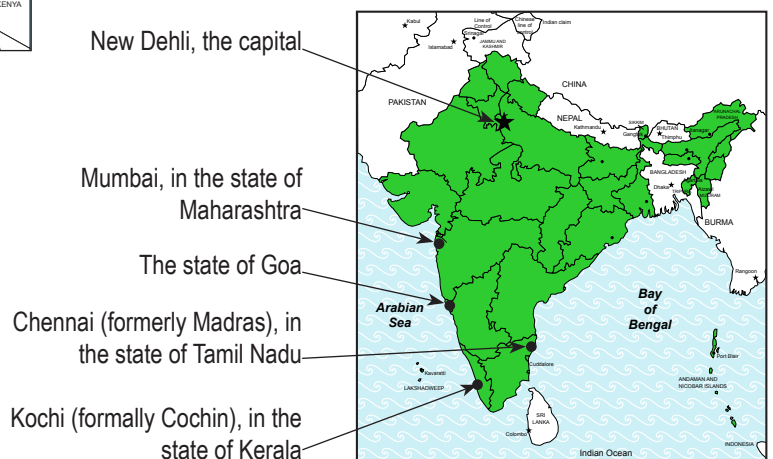
Sefwi Wiawso,
home of the
Jewish community

Accra, the capital

Ghana, pp14, 17



India, p5 Locations mentioned in the article



New Dehli, the capital

Mumbai, in the state of
Maharashtra

The state of Goa

Chennai (formerly Madras), in
the state of Tamil Nadu

Kochi (formally Cochin), in the
state of Kerala



Celebrating Kulanu's 25th Anniversary

2019 is a milestone year for Kulanu as we celebrate 25 years of supporting isolated, emerging, and returning Jewish communities around the globe. We started the year off with a fabulous trip to Uganda for a joint celebration of the 100th anniversary of the Abayudaya community and the 25th anniversary of Kulanu. (See page 12 to read more about this visit.)

Two additional events were held in the United States to mark our 25th anniversary:

Jewish Africa Film Festival



Rabbi Gerald Sussman and Schneur Menaker, photographer/videographer of the "Journey to Judaism" video documenting Kulanu conversion efforts in Madagascar

Kulanu hosted our first Jewish Africa Film Festival this past January at the Center for Jewish History in New York City. It was a companion program to the Jewish Africa Conference of the American Sephardi Federation and Association Mimouna. "Thanks to this conference, mainstream Judaism is beginning to notice these Jewish-African communities," shared Boni Nathan Sussman, Kulanu's vice president. "It is a huge accomplishment and gift to be recognized alongside North African Jews since North African Judaism has very little to do with these newly-emerging communities." The festival was also featured in the Jewish Telegraphic Agency article on January 29, 2019: "African Jewish Communities Get Some Mainstream Recognition After Years on the Margins," by Josefin Dolsten, which can

be read at www.bit.ly/JTA-African-Jewish. Read more about the festival and conference on page 14.

Anniversary Party in Washington, DC

Kulanu celebrated its 25th anniversary in Washington D.C. on Saturday, February 16th. We were honored to host this event at Ohev Sholom, The National Synagogue. Approximately 100 people came out to enjoy light refreshments, a short video, and conversations with new Kulanu board members Rabbi Capers Funnye and Genie Milgrom, as well as other board members and staff. What a wonderful time connecting with old and new friends of Kulanu!



Kulanu President Harriet Bograd and Vice President Boni Nathan Sussman cut the birthday cake at the celebration in Washington DC.

Celebrate Kulanu's Anniversary Near You: Kulanu Across the Globe

Kulanu Across the Globe, an **international weekend celebrating Kulanu**, will celebrate Kulanu's 25th anniversary and all that we've accomplished. We invite communities around the globe to dedicate the **weekend of November 15th-17th** to learn about and discuss the amazing work of Kulanu. You can choose to participate on Friday night, Saturday, or Sunday — or for all the activities! Perhaps share a d'var Torah, sermon, or short videos about emerging Jewish communities around the globe. Learn more and register at www.kulanu.org/katg. See back page for more information. *

JEWISH NIGERIA BLOG

www.jewishnigeria.blog

Jewish Nigeria is a blog about Jewish communities of Nigeria, managed by Avraham Ben Avraham. The blog is now searchable making it a great resource about Jewish activities across the country. Please view the blog online for the latest news at www.jewishnigeria.blog.



INAUGURATION

7 Facts Drawn From The Inauguration of Beit Yaakov Haknesset In Jewish Nigeria



PURIM

Sights & Sounds Of Purim As Jews Across Nigeria Celebrate The Historic Victory Over Haman At Shushan



INTERVIEWS

Talking With Rosh Derekyahu During My Visit To Har Shalom Synagogue in Aba, Abia State



FRANKLIN-MILES TOUR

Tracking Mrs. Anne Franklin As She Speaks and Interacts With Jewish Women In Port Harcourt & Lagos



PESACH

An Unforgettable Visit To Port Harcourt For The "Seder Night" As Jewish Communities Marked The Beginning Of Pesach



YOUTH MOVEMENT

Creating Stronger Bonds Across Jewish Nigeria Through The National Youth Shabbat Movement

The Jews of Madras: Finding History Where Least Expected

By Judi Kloper

Photos by Judi Kloper or courtesy of Davvid Levy

Judi Kloper has been visiting Jewish communities in India (both established and emerging) since 1994 and has been a member of Kulanu's board since early 2015.

Note: The names Chennai and Madras are used interchangeably in this article. While there are several versions of how the city acquired these names, Madras was the name of this city from the 1500s through 1996 when its earlier name of Chennai was restored. Chennai is the capital of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu and is India's 4th largest city.

It was Passover 2015 and I was in Goa, India at a Chabad seder with Jews from around the world. The woman sitting next to me shared that she was from Kerala on the southwestern India coast. I was intrigued. "Oh, the Cochini Jewish community," I said. "I've been there a number of times." She responded, "No. I'm Yemeni. We are the Kerala Jews that no one talks about." She was doing research on her ancestors and her community and hoped to write a book with her findings. I became curious to learn more about the Yemeni Jews in India but could find very little about them.

New Discoveries

A year and a half later, on an afternoon in September 2016, I opened an email that made me feel as if I was discovering a new world. New to me, at least! For in all my years of visiting India, and in particular the city of Chennai (formerly known as Madras), never did I realize that there was once a small but thriving Jewish community there. Amidst the hustle and bustle in Chennai, a city of 10 million people located on the south-eastern coast of India on the Bay of Bengal, lives a very small community of Jews who trace their heritage to The Netherlands, Portugal, France, Germany, Romania, Iraq, Yemen, and Kerala. I've been traveling through India for the past 32 years and while I have visited Jewish communities in other parts of this vast country, I never realized there was a Jewish history here in Chennai where I've spent so much of my time. That is until I



L to R: Rachel (Davvid's daughter), Davvid Levi, Dharshini (Davvid's niece), Rebecca (Davvid's daughter), Sarah Levi (Davvid's mother)

opened that email that Kulanu received from Davvid Levi. Interestingly, Davvid contacted us to ask how he and his family could support Kulanu. Sharing his family's story with me has been a unique gift.

Davvid grew up in this city, and his family has, for generations, called Chennai home. We started exchanging emails and he extended an invitation for me to come and meet his family and some of the remaining Jews in Chennai, as well as to visit some of the sites that were part of the history of the Madras Jews. So little had been known about this community and until now, that's how the Jews here wanted it to remain. Yet, over the past few years, Davvid has been researching his family's history in India sorting through letters, government certificates, photos, and numerous items that date back to the 1700s. He explained that it's very difficult to research the history of the



This hanukiyah from the 1800s belonged to Davvid's great-grandmother Rebecca Cohen. Oil would burn in the bowl-shaped miniature cups.

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Jews of Madras: *continued from previous page*

Jews in Chennai because the records were lost in 1934, 1968, and 1983 when the synagogues and cemeteries were razed. The remaining local Jewish and civil records from Chennai, including accounts and ledgers, were lost in the floods of 2015.

Fascinated and eager to meet Davvid, I took him up on his offer and spent time with him, his mom, and a Jewish couple from Kerala and Mumbai. We spent time at the cemetery, and I also enjoyed a Shabbat evening at the home of Davvid's mom, where I was shown many items of Judaica that date back to at least the 1700s. This included Haggadot, siddurim, mezuzot, candelabra, silver dreidels, besamim (spice box), a yad, shofarot, and hanukkiyot (photos within this article and back page of Fall 2018 Kulanu Magazine www.bit.ly/KulanuMag18Fall). Additionally, Davvid carefully placed on the table in front of me very old and large books that hold original documents and photos of Davvid's relatives, some of whom settled in Madras, and others from Romania and The Netherlands who died in the Holocaust.

From Yemen and Europe to India

Davvid shared that his maternal ancestors were expelled from Portugal in 1496 by the Alhambra

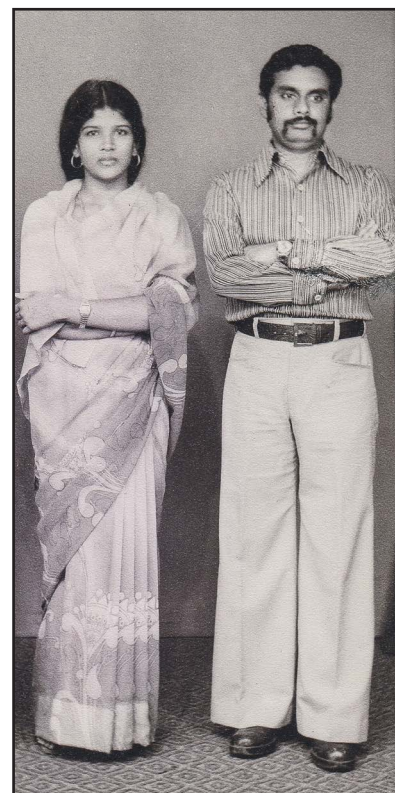


This cabinet filled with Judaica dating as far back as the 1700s is displayed at the home of Davvid's mother, Sarah. All items belonged to Rabbi Salomon Halevi and his wife, Rebecca Cohen (Davvid's great-grandparents). Davvid's parents have made sure to carefully preserve them. It is their hope to donate these items to a local museum so that the original Jewish community of Madras will always be remembered. Photos of some of the contents follow this article.

Decree (the Inquisition). After the Inquisition, they settled in England, Holland, and Italy, and began trading with businessmen from around Europe. Davvid's ancestors who were traders included the De Castro, Franco, Paiva, and Porto families. By 1640, soon after the founding of Madras, many of these Portuguese Jews had settled there and in Cochin (now Kochi) in Kerala. Most of them were traders in diamonds, precious stones, and coral. Many of the Portuguese Jews who were traders and living in Madras used their Jewish names when in Madras. However, they used their Portuguese names when they traveled to Goa (in western India), which was now under Portuguese rule where the long arm of the Inquisition had reached. Other relatives who did not travel to India had settled in Romania, Germany, and France.

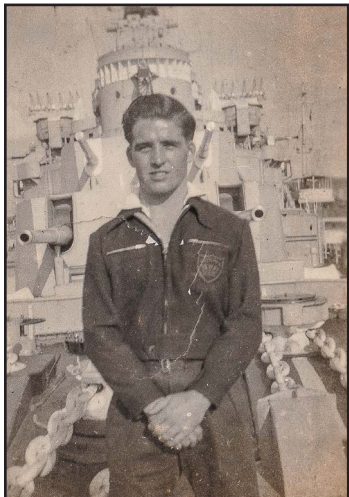


Rabbi Salomon Halevi and Rebecca Cohen (Davvid's great-grandparents; Sarah's maternal grandparents), July 1919, in Rusciuk, Romania.



Sarah Levi and Chanan Levi, Davvid's parents, in 1976

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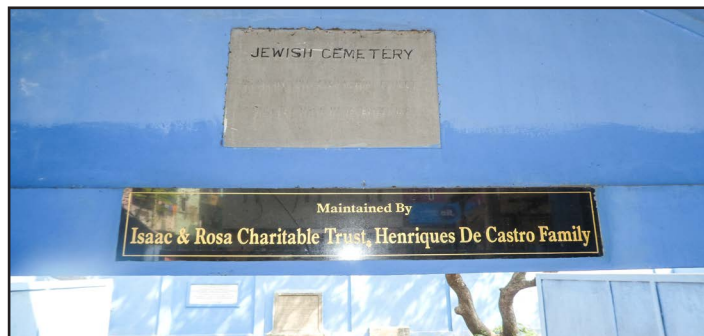
Levi Henriques De Castro (Davvid's grandfather; Sarah's father) after the Holocaust, on board a small naval ship

Davvid's paternal ancestors came from Yemen, as did the family of his maternal great-grandmother Rebecca Cohen, whose father was Rabbi Daniel Yakov Cohen of Cochin. Rebecca was married to Rabbi Salomon Halevi, who came to Madras in the late 1800s, possibly from France. Davvid's other maternal great-grandparents, Isaac and Rosa Henriques De Castro, perished at

Auschwitz in October 1944. A street in Chennai -- Isaac Street -- was named after Isaac, who traded in diamond, coral, and precious gems. Isaac and Rosa's only child, Levi Henriques De Castro (Davvid's maternal grandfather), was traveling in India at age 23 and therefore avoided being murdered in the Holocaust. He traveled to what is now Israel in 1947 to fight against the Arabs in what was known as the War of Independence.

After the Holocaust and fighting in the war in Israel, Levi suffered emotionally and mentally. He found that life in Israel was not what he envisioned and he had no family there, and when Rabbi Salomon Halevi called him back, he returned to India where he owned property and had savings, becoming a businessman there once again. He married Rachel Halevi, who was Rabbi Salomon Halevi's daughter and of Yemeni and European descent. Rachel became a professor at Kerala University, though they lived in Madras and Bangalore as well. The emotional toll of losing his entire family in the Holocaust shattered his life and impeded his ability to thrive again as a businessman.

Sarah (Davvid's mom) was born in Bangalore, the only child of Rachel and Levi. While the family was of considerable financial means, Levi donated so much of his money to Israel during



The entrance to the Beit Ha Haim cemetery. The trust which established this current cemetery and which maintains it was founded by Davvid's mother, Sarah, to honor her paternal grandparents (her father Levi's parents), Isaac and Rosa (Rosenberg) Henriques DeCastro, who were born in Amsterdam and died in the Holocaust at Auschwitz.

its founding that consequently, between that and his lack of success as a businessman, the family lived at poverty level and Sarah eventually had no choice but to sell vegetables on the street to help earn a living. Levi died in 1978 at age 57, and Rachel in 1982 at age 56. They are buried at Beit Ha Haim, the Jewish cemetery on Lloyds Road.

Sarah, however, flourished as a businesswoman. As Davvid explained, "From a roadside vegetable vendor, she became the first woman union leader for vendors, and later she became instrumental in controlling the prices of vegetables in Chennai. She founded the HDC (Henriques DeCastro) group of companies (trucking, commodity, and finance businesses) which she sold in 2007 for a substantial amount, as I and my brother were not capable to handle business as well as she did." Sarah worked hard, saving every rupee so that eventually she not only helped pull her family out of poverty, but she was able to purchase homes to be lived in by her grandchildren when they're older. Davvid explained, "Once she sold her business, she donated a part of her savings to organizations in Israel and gave the rest to her sons, her daughters-in-law, and her grandchildren."

Jewish Settlers in the 1600s

One of the earliest settlers of this community was Jacques de Paiva, who came from Amsterdam and died in 1687. He was buried in the original Jewish cemetery which he had founded in the

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Gershon Joshua and Judi (the author). Gershon came to Chennai many years ago from the Cochin Jewish community in Kerala.

Peddanaickenpet area of Chennai. Most of the Jews who had come to Madras in the 1600s lived on Coral Merchants Street in Muthialpet district, which is where the first synagogue in Chennai was built, on Mint Street. The second synagogue, a much larger one, was built next to where the Central Railway Station is located today on land given to de Paiva by the British. The first synagogue and cemetery, established in 1600, were demolished by the government in 1968, and the land used to build a school. However, in 1934, the first set of gravestones were moved from this first cemetery to the Central Park of Madras cemetery with the gate which was inscribed with Beit ha-Haim in Hebrew, and the second set of tombstones from this cemetery were moved in 1968 to an area called Kasimedu. In 1983, due to the Harbour Extension Project, the cemetery was once again relocated to its current location on Lloyds Road.

While the synagogues and the original cemeteries are no longer there, Davvid took me to the Jewish cemetery on Lloyds Road where most of the 30 or so headstones had been moved to and where a few of the more recent Jewish residents of Chennai had been buried. It is said that there were about 78 Jews buried in the original cemeteries. Davvid took it upon himself to search for some of the original headstones. After much effort he found them, some having been used by local homes as flooring laid face down, and he had them moved to the new cemetery which was established in 1983 and renovated in

2016. Davvid is still searching for the missing tombstones of some of the community's oldest Jewish residents, such as Bartolomeo Rodrigues and Jaques de Paiva.

Davvid, now in his early 40s, his wife Divya and their two daughters Rebecca and Rachel, his mother Sarah and father Chanan, and his brother Asher and his family, live in Chennai and Kochi, Kerala. The family celebrates Shabbat and the high holidays at their condo away from their home in the city. Davvid explained that where their other home is, no one cares about what other people do or wear or what their religious beliefs are; they feel safe, and security is good. Davvid is a captain in the Merchant Navy, and he and his family are the last of the Paradesi (Sephardic Jewish immigrants to India) Jews in Chennai; his family goes back more than 500 years in this area.

A few days after spending a delightful Shabbat evening with Davvid and his mom, Sarah, at their home, I was invited to lunch with them and his niece, and with their friends, Gershon and Elizabeth Joshua. Gershon is a Cochin Jew and Elizabeth is of the Bene Israel from Mumbai, a community in Maharashtra state that dates back between 600-1000 years according to a study published in 2016 in the scientific journal PLOS (Public Library of Science), though the community itself believes their ancestors arrived between the 8th century BCE and the 6th century CE. The Bene Israel community is officially recognized by Israel, as are the Cochin Jews.

Learning about the history of the Jewish community in this southern city gave me a glimpse into the history of the Yemeni Jews of India. As I continue my journeys through India, I hope to learn much more about Yemeni Jewish history there, as well as more about their culture, past and present. Then, when I meet other Indian Jews of Yemeni heritage, I can assure them, "Yes, we will talk about you along with the other Jews of India. Your history here matters too."

more photos on next page



▲ This memorial stone is located in the Jewish cemetery, Beit Ha Haim, on Lloyds Road in Chennai. It is written in Tamil, the language of the state of Tamil Nadu, and translated into English it reads:

In loving memory of my beloved friend and his family who were murdered by Adolf Hitler, Germany.
Isaac Henriques De Castro also known as Isaac Anna [Anna is a Tamil term of endearment meaning "elder brother"]. Isaac Anna was always ready to help us and considered to be one among us.
Rosa Henriques De Castro also known as Rosa Anni [Anni is a Tamil term of endearment meaning "wife of elder brother"]. Rosa Anni was named with a Tamil name, showing the love her parents had for Tamil people.

"They Will Never be Forgotten."

Placed by CN Annadurai, Former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu



◀ This silver besamim (spice box), from 1873, was used in the Madras synagogue.



► These rimmonim (literally, "pomegranates" from the Hebrew) are the finials atop the Torah scrolls which are wound on rollers. These are from the Madras synagogue and used during the 1800s.



▲ The tombstone of David's maternal grandmother, Rachel reads:

*The Body Of
 Rachel Halevi Cohen
 Head Of Physics Department
 Kerala University And Madras
 Hebrew Merchant Lies Under
 The Stone.
 Born 4th October 1926
 Died 15th July 1982*

▲ The tombstone of David's maternal grandfather, Levi, reads:

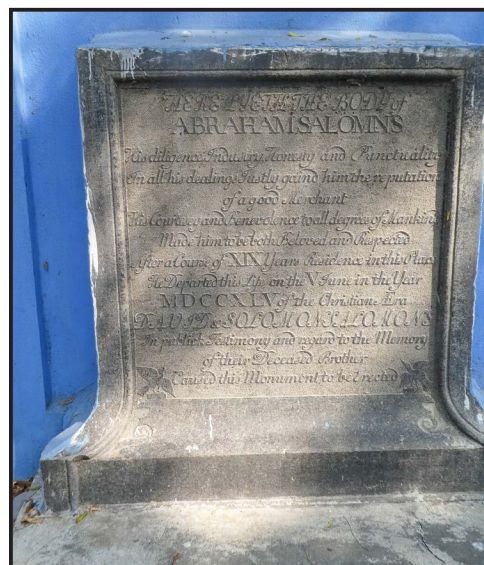
*The Body of
 Levi Henriques De Castro
 A Native of Amsterdam
 And An Eminent Hebrew
 Merchant Of Madras Lies
 Under The Stone
 Born 12th March 1921
 Died 08th February 1978*

► This tombstone from 1745 reads:

Here lyeth the body of Abraham Salomns His diligence, industry, honesty, and punctuality in all his dealings justly gained him the reputation of a good merchant. His courtesy and benevolence to all degrees of mankind made him to be both beloved

and respected. After a course of 19 years residence in this place, he departed this life on the 5th June in the year 1745 of the Christian era. David & Solomon Salomons, in publick testimony and regard to the memory of their deceased brother caused this monument to be erected.

Abraham was originally buried in the first Jewish cemetery but as the burial ground was taken over by the government, it was eventually moved to the Jewish cemetery located on Lloyd's Road. *



Supporting Kulanu for the Next 25 Years and Beyond

Ohavei Olam

Kulanu's monthly donor program is called Ohavei Olam, which means "lovers of the world," and we invite you to help us spread love around the Jewish world by becoming a member.

Ohavei Olam offers us stability with funds to carry out projects at short notice wherever and whenever the need is greatest. Sometimes we are fortunate to receive a donation of books or to find a traveler who can take items to a community, and monthly or quarterly donors give us the flexibility to quickly get hard-to-source items to a community in need. Having these funds available made all the difference when we recently gave the Madagascar Jewish community members access to books they requested, including Tractate Rosh Hashanah to help them prepare for the upcoming holidays.

Ohavei Olam provides the foundational support that allows us to carry out major projects, such as the conversions and weddings that took place in Nicaragua in 2017. Many of the converts are descendants of crypto-Jews who were forced to abandon Judaism under the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisition. Ohavei Olam helps communities and individuals return to their Jewish roots and practice.

Ongoing efforts such as providing internet connections in sub-Saharan African rural Jewish communities can only be sustained if Ohavei Olam continues to be supported. As an example, providing internet connections allows communities to access online Jewish learning, communicate with us at Kulanu, and stay in touch with other communities who share their particular struggles.

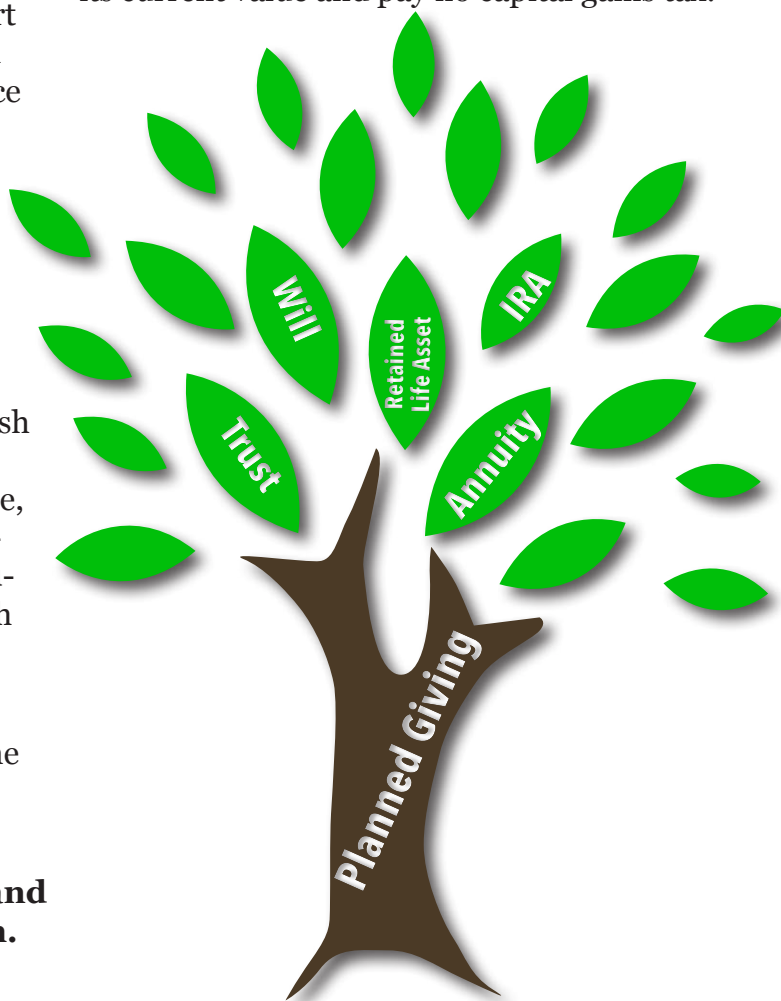
Ohavei Olam brings Jews together to spread the love of Judaism to every corner of the globe.

To become a member of Ohavei Olam, simply visit <https://kulanu.org/donate> and select "monthly" under Gift Information. Any amount makes a big difference.

Planned Giving

Lynne Elson was 85 years old when she first visited the Abayudaya community in Uganda. She felt so connected to the community that she returned to teach and work with them. Upon her passing, she decided to turn her love for her adopted community into a legacy, leaving Kulanu a gift of \$32,000.

If you believe in Kulanu's mission to support emerging global Jewish communities, consider planned giving, as in the example set by Lynne. **Planned Giving simply means including charitable giving in your estate plan and/or related retirement plan.** You can leave a monetary contribution, assets like stocks and bonds, or other gifts and it is tax-deductible, often at the point that you make a commitment to a future gift. You still receive a tax deduction for its current value and pay no capital gains tax.



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Five common ways to participate in planned giving:

A lifetime **trust**

A provision in your **will**, whether by a percentage of the estate or a physical asset

A **retained life asset**, such as real estate; this means you have the use of the property during your lifetime plus an immediate charitable income tax deduction upon making the gift

Making Kulanu the beneficiary (or partial beneficiary) of your **retirement plan/IRA** or an **insurance policy**

A **charitable annuity** plan: An annuity is usually created by giving an asset or monies to a charitable annuity (a form of a trust) which promises to pay you a fixed or variable periodic interest for a period, at the end of which payments cease and the balance is retained by Kulanu.

One easy way to participate in planned giving is to **donate appreciated stock**. You can send stocks to a donor-advised fund run by a community foundation, Jewish Federation, B'nai B'rith, or Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, and then advise the fund when you want your donated funds to be passed on to Kulanu. You only need to report one donation of stock to the IRS even if your gift eventually goes to many different charities at different times. You get the full deduction in the year you donate the stock to the donor-advised fund.

We encourage you to contact us if you are interested in discussing these options.

Our supporter Lawrence J. Gross, Esq. kindly contributed to this article.

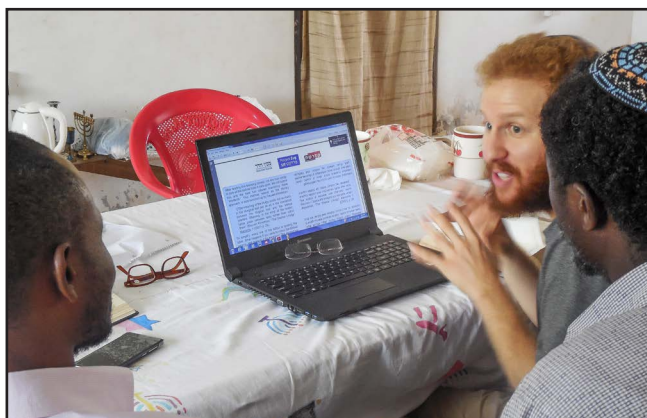
Examples of What Your Contribution Supports:



The Cameroon community celebrating with their new Torah scroll sent by Kulanu. See article kulanu.org/about/where-have-torahs-gone. Photo courtesy Amir Etele.



Nili Salem b'Simcha (center) has visited Kulanu communities on three continents, teaching Torah and Jewish life, and bringing Jewish music and joy. On this trip, Kulanu helped pay travel expenses.

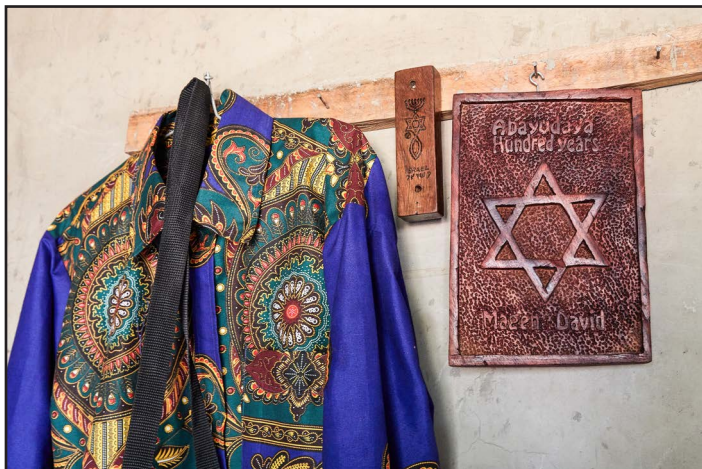


Kulanu sent rabbinical student Loren Berman to teach in Ghana, where we've been sending people since the 1990s. We have also sent them (and others) computers, hotspots, and smartphones to allow communication with Kulanu and the outside world. *

Abayudaya 100th Anniversary Trip

By Joanne Trangle, founder of Select Treks (www.selecttreks.com), a company that organizes custom travel for groups of all sizes, specializing in service and adventure travel. Joanne also is the founder of Global Village Connect (www.globalvillageconnect.org), a non-profit organization that connects classrooms and communities by developing practical solutions that improve health, education and economic opportunity through sustainable micro-enterprise.

Photos by Mike Tucker



Inside a local shop near Nabugoya that sells Judaica

Recently, to celebrate Kulanu's 25th anniversary and the 100th anniversary of the Abayudaya Jewish community, Kulanu sponsored a trip to Uganda which I was honored to lead. As the founder of Global Village Connect, I have been accompanying people to Uganda to visit the Abayudaya community for the past eight years. This particular trip was very special.

There was a palpable feeling of gratitude from the community for all the work Kulanu has done throughout the years. Their appreciation was on full display during many speeches, especially at Hadassah Primary School in the main village of Nabugoya Hill. Aaron, the headmaster of the school, Sam the accountant, and Stephen the financial officer, showed the group around and shared the students' progress reports. From classrooms to the newly-built kitchen and new dorms under construction, the school is thriving.

We also visited Tikkun Olam Primary School in the small village of Namutumba. There, Kulanu has



Suzan Nakumiza and her son David, Yona Kabweru, Rav Shadrach Mugoya Levy, and Joseph Katu, standing at the bima in the new Namatumba synagogue.

contributed to a new computer lab and supported a Days For Girls program, where girls make reusable menstrual pads and learn about reproductive health and women's rights. The program has been successful in keeping girls in school.

At a visit to the Hope Music and Dance Troupe, we had a great time attempting to learn traditional African music and dance. That was a real treat! We had Shabbat dinner at the home of headmaster Aaron, whose wife Naomi cooked a beautiful dinner for all of us. Visits with local artisans in several villages—including a drum maker, a mat maker, and a furniture maker—taught us first-hand about life in Uganda. We made new connections and were able to witness up-close the successes of the projects Kulanu has supported in the Abayudaya community. I encourage all to visit and to contribute to the enterprising work of the Abayudaya community in partnership with Kulanu.

► Beautiful hanging in the Abayudaya Guest House in Nabugoye



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◀ Abayudaya children at the music and dance festival which Kulanu has sponsored 11 times since 2004. Kulanu also provides the funding every year for the Hadassah Day School students, who are Jewish, Muslim, and Christian, to compete in a regional and national competition in traditional music, dance, and drama.



A young boy enjoying Kulanu's 100th Abayudaya anniversary celebration



◀ Women sewing at the Days for Girls sewing shop in Kampala



Making challah for Shabbat with the local community at the bakery on Nabugoya Hill



Hope Troupe Uganda dancing and playing music at the Kulanu-Abayudaya Music and Dance Festival, part of the joint 25th/100th anniversary celebration

Now we are looking forward to another trip to the Abayudaya in November in collaboration with the Minneapolis Jewish Federation. Everyone is welcome to join this trip -- you don't have to live in Minneapolis. Spend time with the Abayudaya in eastern Uganda amid lush agricultural plains surrounded by hills and mountains. Meet the community, learn about Ugandan Jewish life, and celebrate Shabbat African style. We will be assisting the Tikkun Olam Primary School in building a kitchen and an organic farm on-site so that the students can have healthy lunches every school day. For more information, visit www.jewishminneapolis.org/uganda. *

African Jewish Film Festival

A Kulanu Game Changer

by Bonita Sussman

Photos by Chaya Weinstein

Three years ago, I attended the New York Sephardic Film Festival at the Center for Jewish History in New York City. The films were not only educational and eye-opening, but they were also entertaining. It occurred to me that we could do this for African Jewish Films. This had never been done before and could be a game-changing path toward acceptance of these emerging Jewish African communities.

After eighteen months of searching for venues and major Jewish organizations to cosponsor the event, I was fortuitously introduced to Jason Guberman, the executive director of the American Sephardi Federation (ASF). He explained that the ASF was planning a Jewish Africa Conference. Months later, I received notification of the conference, just five weeks before its scheduled date. Jason asked if Kulanu would like to present the evening program for two of the three nights of the conference. I couldn't believe my ears. The first Kulanu-sponsored African Film Festival was becoming a reality! Jason also asked Kulanu for scholars of sub-Saharan Africa to present at the conference.

Kulanu's wonderful team of President Harriet Bograd, Program Manager Jo Ann Friedman, Communications Director Molly Levine, and I chose four films, contacted directors/producers, confirmed panels to follow each film, recruited the audience, journalists, and sponsors, and arranged for a reception each night. The ASF coordinated with Kulanu on these and many other details.

The Films and Panels

The Kulanu African Jewish Film Festival debuted on January 28th and 29th, 2019, at the Center for Jewish History in New York City, the same place I first conceived of it! Each night featured two films from Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, and Madagascar. The panels included some of the "stars" of the films and were moderated by me.

Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana, produced and directed by Gabrielle Zilkha (2016), documents the development of a Jewish community in the west of Ghana. The panel discussion following the film included a rabbinical student at Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, Loren Berman, who was a 2017 Kulanu Global Teaching Fellow in Ghana; Harriet Bograd, president of Kulanu; and Tudor Parfitt, professor of Sephardic-Mizrahi studies at Florida International University and member of the Kulanu Academic Cohort.



Harriet Bograd and Loren Berman discussing "Doing Jewish: A Story from Ghana"

Yearning to Belong, produced and directed by David Vinik and Debra Gonsker Vinik (2007), documents the story and struggles of the Abayudaya community in Uganda. The film was shown in honor of the 100th anniversary of the community. Panelists included Harriet Bograd; Rachman Nagwere, an Abayudaya musician now living in the United States; and Shepherd Wahnnon, a pioneer in outreach to African Jewish communities since the 1970s, who had just returned from visiting the Abayudaya on a Kulanu-organized tour.

Journey to Judaism: The Jews of Madagascar, by Joshua Kristal and Schneur Menaker (2016), tells the story of the first Jewish community in Madagascar. Panelists included film videographer Schneur Menaker, and Rabbi Gerald Sussman of Temple Emanu-El of Staten Island, Kulanu volunteer and rabbinic advisor who traveled with a Kulanu group to Madagascar.

continued on next page

African Jewish Film Festival, continued from previous page

Re-Emerging: The Jews of Nigeria, directed and produced by Jeff Lieberman (2012), documents the Igbo's passionate connection to their past and to their future as practicing Jews. Serving on the panel were Kulanu board member Rabbi Capers Funnye, chief rabbi of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis and advisor to several Jewish communities in Nigeria; Remy Ilona, Igbo scholar, author, and Ph.D. student at the University of California at Riverside; and filmmaker Jeff Lieberman.



Bonita Nathan Sussman, Rabbi Capers Funnye, Remy Ilona, and filmmaker Jeff Lieberman, discussing Lieberman's 2012 film "Re-Emerging: The Jews of Nigeria." (www.re-emergingfilm.com)

The film festival drew approximately 300 attendees. Details for viewing all these films are available online at www.kulanu.org/films and videos of the panel discussions can be viewed on the Kulanu Facebook page: www.bit.ly/AJFFpanels.

The Jewish Africa Conference

The first Jewish Africa Conference was sponsored by the American Sephardi Federation and Association Mimouna, which seeks to preserve Morocco's ancient Jewish presence. About one hundred participants attended the sessions. Among the many dignitaries attending from around the world were Danny Dayan, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Malcolm Hoenlein from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Yossi Abramowitz representing Israel, and representatives of Moroccan, Egyptian, and Ethiopian consulates.

The topics included saving memories of lost communities in northern Africa, Morocco's

unique role in saving Jewish memory, Israel's efforts in African development, and increasing opportunities for women and children in Africa. Speakers about sub-Saharan emerging communities included Professor Tudor Parfitt, Shalva Weil, Remy Ilona, Rabbi Funnye, and Professor Marla Brettschneider.

Why was the film festival and conference a game-changer for Kulanu communities? It was one of the first times that a major Jewish organization with international ties provided a forum highlighting emerging Jewish communities in sub-Saharan Africa without questioning their existence or scrutinizing their sincerity. These communities were accepted and welcomed; their legitimacy was not contested. The existence of these communities was presented to an audience which included diplomats, scholars, and Jewish community leaders from all parts of the world.

It was the first time that I recall emerging Jewish communities being treated with the same dignity as the long-established ones in Africa. It may have been the first time that emerging Jewish communities were embraced and portrayed as the hope of the future.

It is my hope that the new relationships which were formed through the American Sephardi Foundation-Kulanu partnership will yield many positive fruits for our sub-Saharan partner communities. May this help them gain more recognition in the worldwide Jewish community. ✱



Bonita Nathan Sussman and Rabbi Capers Funnye discussing Jeff Lieberman's 2012 film, "Re-Emerging: the Jews of Nigeria."

Board Member Highlight: Genie Milgrom

In her own voice



Ani Yehudi. אני יהודי. I am Jewish. Three simple words that speak volumes and are so difficult for many to say out loud.

This is the story of the B'nei Anusim, the descendants of the Jews that were forced to go underground during the Spanish Inquisition. This is also my story.

I was born in Cuba and moved to Miami at the age of 4, at the start of Cuba's Communist revolution. I was raised Roman Catholic, attending Catholic schools from kindergarten through university. Yet, from a very young age, I felt Jewish inside. It was impossible to explain but I had a strong feeling of not belonging to the family I had been born into. This is a very difficult concept for a child to grapple with, and somehow this knowledge turned my life upside down.

After marrying a Catholic Cuban man, life just swept me away until my late twenties when, as a single mom with two children, I began a long journey of self-discovery that ended with a formal Jewish Orthodox conversion. This is not a path for all, but it was the path for me and I was not only proud but thrilled to stand tall and say **Ani Yehudi**.

Several years after my conversion, I was still preoccupied with the fact that the feelings and emotions I had felt as a child had not been fully addressed. I felt that those deep inner feelings I had lived with as a child must have had a tangible origin. It became very important for me to research my lineage to see if there really was a Jewish ancestor in my past. My maternal grandparents were first cousins from Spain and their family tree showed endogamous marriages dating back to the 1700s. Given that my grandmother, throughout her lifetime, had taught me some Jewish customs that had been disguised as Spanish customs, I had suspicions that they could have descended from the Spanish Jews. Meticulously, I followed her lineage, grandmother

after grandmother, and was able to trace the grandmothers, one after another all the way back to 1405, to pre-Inquisition Spain and Portugal. I was also able to identify more than forty relatives that sat squarely on my maternal line and who had been burned alive on the pyres or had been brought before the Inquisitors to serve other sentences for practicing Judaism. With all of this in hand, I approached the highest Jewish Court in Jerusalem, the beit din gadol, and requested that I be given a return to prove that my family had been Jewish all along and that my descendants would be Jewish.

After many years, I was given this letter. This was one of the most meaningful moments in my life, yet I knew that even though my personal journey had seen a happy ending, there remain countless others in every corner of the world that cannot reach this level of identification with the pre-Inquisition Jews even as they yearn to return to the Jewish people.

Shunned by most communities, the B'nei Anusim find themselves adrift in a world that will no longer accept them as Christians and the Jewish world that will not accept them as Jews. Their crime? To feel in their souls that they are Jewish.

We must learn to be compassionate and to extend a hand, understanding that this is the only time in history that so many are trying to claim their roots and a rightful place amongst the Jewish people. Why now? No one knows and it is truly irrelevant. Yet so many, like me, need that recognition and do not have a way to get back unless we extend a hand. It is my mission in life, and my mission as a new Kulanu board member, to support the B'nei Anusim communities around the world.

Genie Milgrom has written several books documenting her history and family. *My 15 Grandmothers*, *How I Found my 15 Grandmothers*, and *Pyre to Fire* have all won the Latino Author Book Awards and the Literary Titan Award. Genie has been featured in newspapers around the world and has spoken at the Knesset in Israel and the Parliament in the E.U. She has been awarded the Medal of the Four Sephardic Synagogues. ✱

Remembering Two Pillars of Kulanu

Yaakov Gladstone

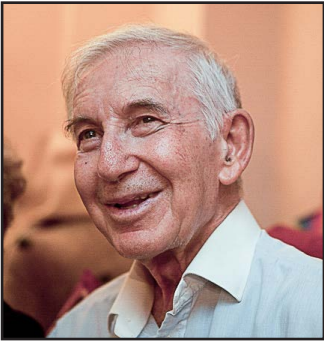


Photo by Peter Svarzbein

Kulanu is saddened by the loss of Yaakov Gladstone who died in May 2019 at the age of 95. Yaakov was a brilliant man who dedicated much of his life to helping others through education, philanthropy, and community outreach.

Most recently, Yaakov had been living in a senior home in Toronto near his relatives and led a musical theater group with his senior neighbors. He was also active at Darchei Noam Synagogue. Kulanu awarded Yaakov Gladstone a Lifetime Achievement Certificate in 2009 recognizing his tireless work in the cause of Jewish diversity (photo gallery: www.bit.ly/YaakovReception). He developed assistance programs for the Jews of Belmonte,

Portugal, and the Jews of Uganda and Ghana, as well as many others. He was the founder of Hatzaad Harishon (the First Step) in the 1960s in New York, a group that brought together black and white Jews. He led active Kulanu chapters in New York and Florida for many years, and would never hesitate to call Harriet Bograd with the name of a person or community that he believed Kulanu should reach out to. Even when he no longer was able to write emails himself, he'd dictate emails to his aides to send to Harriet. He deeply, deeply loved Kulanu's work -- it was his life's work.

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College has an annual Yaakov Gladstone Award for Fine Teaching which "honors Yaakov Gladstone whose life exemplifies fine teaching in the fullest sense." May Yaakov's memory be a blessing in the lives of all who were touched by him and his work.

Ben Baidoo

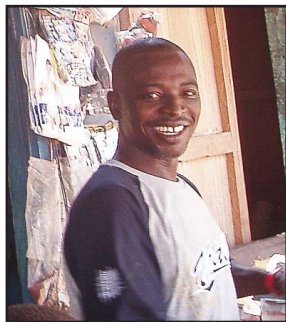


Photo by Nili Salem
B'Simcha 2005

Kulanu mourns the death in January 2019 of master craftsman/tailor Ben Baidoo who designed and made beautifully embroidered challah covers and kente cloth tallitot from 2001 until his passing. This project raises funds for the Tifereth Israel Jewish Community in Sefwi Wiawso, Ghana. Since Kulanu began selling Ben's products in 2001, Kulanu has paid the community a total of \$52,471 for challah covers and \$7,763 for tallitot. Other organizations have sold his crafts as well. In 2006, Kulanu awarded Ben Baidoo a certificate as a Master Craftsman "for his superb work designing and making beautiful and inspiring challah covers and tallitot that weave connections among Jews around the world." Here is a wonderful video by Gabrielle Zilkha showing Ben making challah covers in his workshop: www.bit.ly/BenChallahCover.

Ben passed away from cancer at age 52, and is survived by his wife Beatrice and three children: Joshua Brafı (age 14), Harriet Nkrumah (age 12, who is named after Kulanu's own Harriet Bograd), and Kwaku Baidoo (age 6). May they be comforted by the love of their family and community. May Ben's memory always be a blessing in the lives of his family and community.

To learn more about Ben's community, go to www.kulanu.org/ghana. If you want to purchase these challah covers or tallitot, visit www.kulanuboutique.com. We expect that people trained by Ben will continue this work.



Challah covers photo by Chaya Weinstein

Kulanu Notes

B'nei Anousim Conference in Brazil



Rabbi Gerald and Bonita Sussman (pictured with Salomon Buzaglo of the Institute for Sefardi and Anusim Studies, and Carlos Maciel, a member of the community who served as translator) attended a conference in Recife, Brazil in November 2018 entitled the First Brazilian Encounter of Crypto-Jewish Studies (translated from Portuguese). The conference issued a declaration of B'nei Anousim rights in both English and Portuguese (www.kulanu.org/declaration-of-recife). Scholars and representatives from Israel, France, Portugal, and elsewhere

attended, focusing on many of the issues which the B'nei Anousim face. While some choose not to convert, many B'nei Anousim desire conversion but have not been given the opportunity, even facing rejection from established Jewish communities. Many Brazilians who are seeking their true identity as B'nei Anousim do not live near established Jewish groups, or they are not welcomed by established groups that are near them. Kulanu is involved with many B'nei Anousim groups and congregations in Brazil. This summer we have again sent a Brazilian rabbinical student to teach them as part of the Kulanu Global Teaching Fellows.

2018 Tribute Journal

Kulanu is pleased to present our 2018 Tribute Journal honoring **Mickey and Mordy Feinberg, Sandy Leeder, Jack and Diane Zeller, Rahel and Jordan Rosner, and Seaboard Region of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs.**

If you haven't already, please take a moment to read the ads and see the photos to get a sense of the tremendous impact our honorees have made at Kulanu and in Jewish communities around the globe:

www.bit.ly/kulanu-tribute-2018.

Thank you to our honorees and all of our generous donors!



International Roundtable on Black Judaism

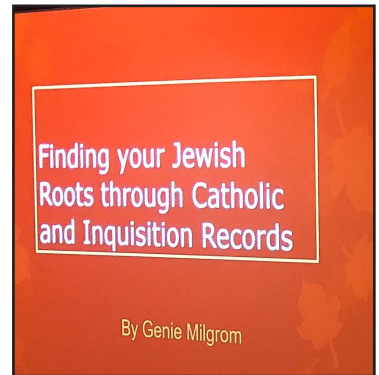
Rabbi Gerald and Bonita Sussman attended the Third Miami Beach International Roundtable on Black Judaism, organized by Florida International University and the University of Utah this past February at the Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU. Professors Tudor Parfitt and Nathan Devir, part of the Kulanu Academic Cohort, co-chaired the event. Bonita's presentation, entitled "Mainstreaming Sub-Saharan Jewish Communities: The New Frontier," and Rabbi Sussman's presentation, "Peoplehood vs. Faith: Self Definition in Returning and Emerging Jewish Communities," were well-received. Over twenty scholars, activists, and concerned individuals participated.

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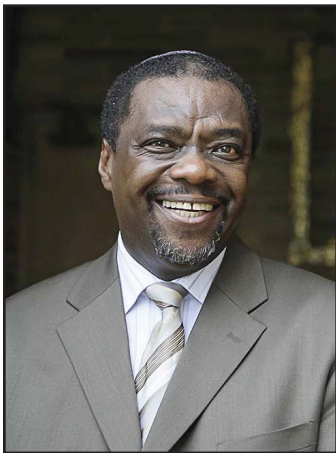
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Conference of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies

Genie Milgrom, Kulanu board member, presented at the annual conference of The Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies in Denver on June 30th. Genie presented a genealogy workshop on finding one's crypto-Jewish ancestry (title slide shown). This year's theme, "Place & Identity: Redefining the Crypto-Judaic Experience in the New World," invited presenters to share research on all aspects of crypto-Judaic history and experience in the Western Hemisphere, as well as new projects and personal narratives. Learn more at www.cryptojews.com.



New Board Member Rabbi Capers Funnye Honored



Kulanu board member **Rabbi Capers Funnye** has been recognized by the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs (JCUA) of Chicago with the 2019 Rabbi Robert J. Marx Social Justice Award "for his inspiring leadership and lifelong dedication to social justice."

The JCUA wrote that for the past forty years, Rabbi Funnye has worked to "promote a vibrant and equitable Jewish community locally, nationally, and globally. He has dedicated his life to building bridges within and beyond the Jewish community. Through this work, he lives out the prophetic calling to pursue justice."

To learn more about Rabbi Funnye, this award, and the JCUA, please go to www.jcua.org/actsofchange2019/actsofchange2019-honoree.

Also, please see next page for additional information about Rabbi Funnye.

Indonesian Students Travel to Israel

We are excited to have collaborated once again with Ohr Torah Stone to bring students from a Kulanu partner community to study in Israel. In May, two community members from Indonesia arrived in Israel for intensive Jewish study. **Voldano Izac Verlos Hokoyoku** studied at the Nidchei Yisrael program at Ohr Torah Stone, while **Herlina Anace Yawang** learned at Midreshet B'erot Bat Ayin, a women's Orthodox seminary located south of Jerusalem. The two studied Judaism and connected to Israel through weekly trips which allowed them to experience the country. They also had weekly lessons about how to teach the community when they return.



Jack Zeller (Kulanu's founder and president emeritus) and Herlina Anace Yawang in Israel at the midrasha Be'Erot Bat Ayin

continued on next page

Meet Our New Board Members

At our retreat this past February, we welcomed four new members to the Kulanu board. We are excited and honored that these four individuals have chosen to devote their time, knowledge, and skills to furthering Kulanu's mission.

Rabbi Capers C. Funnye, Jr. is Chief Rabbi of the International Israelite Board of Rabbis which



serves Jewish communities in the United States, the Caribbean, South Africa, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, and Uganda. For the past 38 years, he has been the rabbi and spiritual leader of Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation in Chicago. Rabbi Funnye earned a Bachelor of Arts in Hebrew Literature and rabbinic ordination from the Israelite Board of Rabbis, Inc., Queens, NY. Rabbi Funnye also earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Jewish Studies and Master of Science in Human Service Administration from Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies, Chicago, Illinois. Rabbi Funnye has lectured at numerous universities, synagogues, churches and various community organizations throughout the United States. He has appeared on several national and

local television programs and spoken on numerous radio programs both national and local. Rabbi Funnye and his wife Mary have four children and are the proud grandparents of 3 granddaughters and 9 grandsons.

Modreck Maeresera, a Lemba Jew, is the current president of the Harare Lemba Synagogue in Zimbabwe. This synagogue for Lemba Jews in Harare was founded in May 2013 with sponsorship from Kulanu. Modreck is married to Brenda and they are proud parents to three children, Aviv Yehudah, Shlomo Makomborero, and Maya Miriam. Modreck holds a diploma in journalism from the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM) in the United Kingdom. He works as a student recruiter for Malaysian universities.



Genie Milgrom was born in Havana, Cuba into a Roman Catholic family of Spanish ancestry. She is currently the past president of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Miami, President of Tarbut Sefarad-Fermoselle in Spain, as well as past president of the Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies. Genie and her husband Michael reside in Florida, and between them have five children and twenty-one grandkids in the USA and Israel. View an introductory video here: www.bit.ly/GenieIntro or www.bit.ly/GenieIntroduccion. Read more about Genie on page 16.

Jeannette Orantes is the president of the Asociación Judía de Guatemala Adat Israel. She was born in Guatemala City. Her academic instruction was completed at a Catholic school run by nuns, keeping with the Catholic tradition that her parents followed. She graduated as secretary and currently holds the position of Secretary of the Presidency in the dairy industry. After overcoming many obstacles, Jeannette converted to Judaism in February 2013. Jeannette and her husband have three children, including her daughter Rivka who currently is a fellow at the Union of Reform Judaism's Roswell Klal Israel Fellowship and plans on attending rabbinical school.



Thank You, Donors

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[more about *Ohavei Olam* on page 10]

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Special Thanks

A special thank you to **Wyatt** and his family in honor of Wyatt becoming a bar mitzvah. Their extraordinary fundraising provided a kitchen and social hall for the Kasuku Jewish Community in Kenya. So far, \$14,119 has been raised, with 67 donations ranging from \$25 to \$3000. No amount is too small to make a difference!

A special thank you to **Jonathan Popper and his family** who, on his becoming a bar mitzvah, raised \$1595 for a children's room and a Ner Tamid (eternal light) at Congregation Adat Israel in Guatemala.

A special thank you to **Ethan King and family** who, in celebration of Ethan becoming a bar mitzvah, have so far raised \$3716 to support the Harare Lemba Synagogue in Zimbabwe.

Kulanu celebrated its **25th anniversary** with two special events: the first Kulanu Film Festival this past January and a festive celebration at the Kulanu board retreat in Washington D.C. this past February. *Kulanu thanks all who sponsored and/or attended our special events! **

**Todah Rabah to everybody
who donated to Kulanu!**



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Kulanu ("All of Us") is a tax-exempt organization of Jews of varied backgrounds and practices which works with isolated, emerging, and returning Jewish communities around the globe, supporting them through networking, education, economic development projects, volunteer assignments, research, and publications about their histories and traditions.

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*Supporting Isolated,
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Celebrate with Us: Kulanu Across the Globe



Join Us Shabbat Weekend November 15-17

Celebrate Kulanu's 25th anniversary with communities around the globe! Dedicate all or part of the weekend to learn about and discuss the amazing work of Kulanu. Share a d'var Torah (sermon), view photos or videos, or share readings about our emerging Jewish communities. More on page 3 and at www.kulanu.org/katg.



Countries shown clockwise from top left: India, Cameroon (Amir Etele), India, India, Cameroon (Amir Etele), Italy (Rabbi Barbara Aiello), Kenya (Yehudah Kimani)